

Richard Garfield's CARNIVAL OF MONSTERS

A MONSTROUSLY MAGNIFICENT CARD GAME FOR 2 TO 5 PLAYERS

Come one! Come all!

See the most mysterious of sights as we present to you magnificent creatures that will boggle the imagination!

Stay back, if you be faint of heart, for these are no common, ordinary, everyday beasts.

*Nay! Here you will find the denizens of a half-dozen exotic realms,
he likes of which you have never seen before!*

The carnival is coming to a village near you, ready to delight and amaze! But this is not your typical circus. As the master of a Carnival of Monsters, you must present the audience with an unparalleled spectacle by building the most magnificent menagerie of monsters the realm has ever seen!

You must explore the magical lands where the monsters make their homes, capture the finest specimens, and present them to the crowd. But be careful! Not all monsters are peaceful, and should the more dangerous ones get out of control, you'll have to hire help to get them back in place.

After four seasons, the most profitable and glorious Carnival of Monsters will truly become the greatest show of them all!

COMPONENTS



82 Land Cards • 78 Monster Cards • 13 Staff Member Cards • 7 Season Cards • 21 Event Cards
21 Secret Goal Cards • 12 Loan Cards • 5 Consolidated Loan Cards
15 Hunter Tokens • 60 Gold Crowns • 3 Royal Hunter Dice
5 Player Boards • 1 Main Board

THE IDEA OF THE GAME

Carnival of Monsters is a card-drafting game in which players try to collect sets of Land cards so they can capture and display strange and exotic Monsters, hire talented Staff to help run their enterprise, and pursue their own Secret Goals. Points are

awarded for displaying Monsters, completing Goals, and earning Gold Crowns over four “Seasons” of play. In the end, the player with the most profitable and spectacular carnival is the winner!

SETTING UP THE GAME

1) Place the main board in the middle of the table. Stack the Loan cards on the pawnbroker’s chest on the main board.



2) Shuffle all of the Carnival cards together and create a face-down draw deck on the matching space of the main board.



3) Shuffle the Season cards and draw 4 at random (without looking at them!). Place them face down on the matching space of the main board. Return the other 3 Season cards to the box (without revealing them)

4) Give each player a player board and 4 Gold Crowns. Put the rest of the Gold Crowns in the center of the main board to form a “bank,” along with the Hunter tokens and the Royal Hunter dice.



5) Shuffle the 10 Starting Land cards and deal 2 to each player. Place your Starting Land cards face up above your player board. Return any unused Starting Lands to the box.

PLAYING THE GAME

Carnival of Monsters is played over four rounds called “Seasons.” At the beginning of each Season, the players receive a hand of 8 Carnival cards. You will pick 1 card to keep (capture) and pass the rest to your neighbor, repeating this until all of the cards have been taken. During the Season, you may be able to play some Monsters. At the end of the Season, those Monsters are placed in your “Menagerie” until the end of the game. After four Seasons, you will add up the points for all of the Monsters in your Menagerie, any Secret Goals you have completed, and any Gold Crowns you have. The player with the highest total will earn the title of “Grand Master of Monstrous Carnivals”—at least until the next game!

SPENDING MONEY (AND TAKING LOANS)



Various actions you take during the game may require you to spend or receive money, such as keeping a card to play later or playing a Staff card. Any Gold Crowns you spend always go to the bank, and any Gold Crowns you earn are taken from the bank. Gold Crowns come in different denominations: You may make change with the bank at any time.

It is possible (some may say likely!) that at some point you will be called upon to spend money that you don’t have (you may even choose to spend Gold Crowns when you don’t have any!). If this happens, you must take a Loan card from the main board. When you take a Loan card, you also take 3 Gold Crowns from

the bank. You may use these Gold Crowns as normal.

But: at the end of the game, every Loan card you have costs you 5 Victory Points!

It is not possible to repay those loans, you must keep them till the end of the game.

Be careful about taking a lot of loans, or you may find your profits vanishing!

Note: You can exchange three Loan cards for a Consolidated Loan card if you run out of Loan cards. Consolidated Loan cards do not provide any additional Crowns, and penalize you 15 Victory Points (the same as the three Loan Cards it replaces).

THE SEASONS

Each Season is divided into three phases:

- **Reveal Season Card**
- **Capture and Play Carnival Cards**
- **Danger Check!**
- **Seasons End**

PHASE 1: REVEAL SEASON CARD

The public is a fickle bunch, and their tastes change unpredictably from Season to Season. These tastes are represented in the game by the Season cards.

To start the Season, turn over the next Season card on the main board. The Season card shows one type of Monster that the public is especially interested in.

SEASON BONUS

The audience will pay more to see the Monsters that are in demand this Season. The first time each player displays a Monster that matches the Season card, they receive a bonus of 2 Gold Crowns from the bank. You can only receive this bonus once each Season.



TROPHY

In addition, the carnival that can display the most impressive collection of Monsters of the current Season’s type will earn the Victory Points shown on the Season card. They take the Season card as a Trophy, adding it to their Menagerie (see “Season’s End”).

Example: It’s the first Season, and the Aerie Season card is revealed: The public demands to see monsters from the Aerie Lands!



During the Season, John is able to play the Phoenix Monster card (an Aerie Monster). He immediately takes 2 Crowns from the bank and adds them to his funds.



At the end of the Season, John’s 16-point Phoenix is easily worth more than all of the Aerie Monsters each of the other players have played, so John gets to claim the Aerie Season Trophy—worth 3 Victory Points.

PHASE 2: CAPTURE AND PLAY CARNIVAL CARDS

A carnival is nothing without its attractions!

In this step, you will scour the Realms for the Monsters that the public wants to see, but keep an eye out for other opportunities you might find along the way!

All players play simultaneously during this phase!

First, every player is dealt 8 Carnival cards from the deck. Keep your cards secret from the other players.

Now, all players will “capture” cards, one at a time, until all of the cards in their hands have been captured. Capturing a card involves three steps:

1. Capture 1 Card
2. Pass Remaining Cards
3. Play or Keep Your Captured Card

STEP 1. CAPTURE 1 CARD



Each player looks at the cards in their hand and chooses **1 card** to capture, placing it face down on the journal space of their player board.

STEP 2. PASS REMAINING CARDS

Then, all players pass **the rest** of the Carnival cards in their hand to the next player. The direction that cards are passed depends on which Season you are playing:

In the **first** and **third** Seasons, always pass cards to the **left**.

In the **second** and **fourth** Seasons, always pass cards to the **right**.

When you receive cards from your neighbor, place them face down next to your player board **without looking at them**.

STEP 3. PLAY OR KEEP YOUR CAPTURED CARD

Finally, you must decide what to do with the card you captured. You always have two choices: **Play** the card now or **Keep** it for later.

OPTION 1: PLAY YOUR CAPTURED CARD

The different types of cards are played in different ways:

LAND CARDS

You need Land cards in order to play Monsters (see below). There are six different kinds of Lands shown on the cards, and each card provides you with a number of Land Points for that kind of Land. Land Points are spent to play Monster cards (see “Monster Cards”).

When you play a Land card, place it face up next to your player board. You will find it easier if you place Land cards from the same Realm together.



Example: Nene has captured an Aerie Land card, which she decides to play right away. She adds the new Aerie card to the Aerie she already had. Now she has 2 Aerie Land Points so she can display more exciting Aerie Monsters!

DISTANT LANDS: Some Lands are harder to reach than others. You can only play these “Distant Lands” if you **already** have other Land cards of the same type in play.



If the Land card shows one Distant Land icon, you can only play it if you already have **at least 1** matching Land card in front of you.



If the Land card shows two Distant Land icons, you can only play it if you already have **at least 2** matching Land cards in front of you.

Note: It doesn't matter which matching Land cards you have, and you can use the same cards to qualify for any number of Distant Land cards.



Example: Mark already has one Enchanted Forest, so he can play a Stone Circle, which has one Distant Land symbol. This would give him a total of 3 Enchanted Forest Land Points that he could use to display Monsters.

But, he could not play the Fey Nexus, because he only has one Enchanted Forest and the Fey Nexus requires two matching Land cards to play. After he plays the Stone Circle, he'll have 2 Enchanted Forest Land cards, so he'll be able to play the Fey Nexus later.

MONSTER CARDS

These cards depict the wondrous creatures you can display in your Carnival. Each Monster comes from one of the six different Lands, and is worth a number of Victory Points at the end of the game.

In order to play a Monster card, you must spend Land Points from matching Land cards. The number of Land Points you must spend is equal to the Monster's Level, shown in the top corner of the card.

If you have enough Land Points, you can place the Monster card face up in front of you.



Example: Nene wants to play her Level 4 Phoenix. Fortunately, she has two regular Aerie Land Cards and a Cloud Castle (worth 3 Aerie Land Points), which provides her enough Aerie Land Points to display the magnificent Phoenix. The crowd will love it

*Important: Each Land Point can only be spent once per Season to capture Monsters! So, if you have 6 Land Points from Darkland Land cards, you can only play Darklands Monsters with a **total** cost of 6 or less.*

You **can** use part of a Land card's Land Points to pay for one Monster, and use its other Land Points to pay for another Monster later. For example, if Nene played a Giant Condor (requires 2 Land Points) and paid for it with her Cloud Castle (worth 3 Land Points), she would still have 1 Land Point left to display another Monster.

Playing Hint: We find that it helps if you place your Monsters on display on top of or next to the Land cards that you use to pay for the Monster. That way it's easier to see how many Land Points you have left! Just remember to keep the Land Points on your cards visible.



Example: After putting the Phoenix on display, Nene only has 1 unused Aerie Land Point left, so she cannot play the Roc she just captured (requires 2 Land Points). She'll have to save the Roc until she can get more Aerie lands or wait for the next Season, when she can again use all 5 of her Aerie Land Points.



DANGEROUS MONSTERS: Some Monsters are simply more dangerous than others. While these beasts may attract more visitors to your Carnival (and award more victory points!), there is a risk that they will escape to terrorize the kingdom. See “Phase 3: Danger Check!” to learn how to handle these creatures.



MONSTROUS LORE: Certain Monsters offer more than a mere attraction. These creatures can reveal valuable secrets that a canny Carnival Master can use to their advantage. When you play a Monster card with the Monstrous Lore symbol, you get to immediately draw 1 Carnival card from the deck, which you may play immediately or store to play later (for free—see “Option 2: Store your Captured Card”).



Example: Drew has just played the Merfolk (using one of his Depths Land Points). Studying the Merfolk reveals a valuable piece of knowledge, so Drew gets to draw one free Carnival card from the deck. He could play it now, or put it in storage without having to pay the normal cost!

DREAMLAND MONSTERS: Everyone knows that you can dream anywhere—all you need to do is sleep! Likewise, the creatures that make their home in dreams can be found anywhere...

You can use any kind of Land Points to pay the cost to play a Dreamlands Monster. Unlike other Monster types, you are not required to use only Dreamlands Land Points.



Example: Ron just captured the mysterious Moonbeast, which he knows would be a big hit with the audience. Unfortunately, he only has one Dreamlands Land card in his collection, which doesn't provide enough Land Points. But, the Moonbeast is a Dreamlands Monster so Ron can use any kind of Land Points. By combining his Aerie Land Point with the three Land Points from his Dreamlands, he can pay the costs and put the Moonbeast on display!

Important: Just because you can play Dreamlands Monsters using any kind of Land Points, that doesn't mean that the Dreamlands can be used for other kinds of Monsters! Land Points from Dreamlands cards can only be used to play Dreamlands Monsters.

STAFF CARDS

No one can run a Carnival all on their own—it takes a lot of helpers to keep the Monsters wrangled and the public happy! Sometimes, an exceptionally talented staff member can bring huge profits to the Carnival master.

Staff cards show talented people who can work at your Carnival. But they will not work for free: unlike all other kinds of cards, you must pay Gold Crowns when you play a Staff card. The Gold Crowns you must pay are shown in the top corner of the Staff card. Place your new staff member face up next to your player board. Each Staff card has an on-going effect that you can use after playing that card. All Staff effects are permanent, and last until the end of the game.



Example: Since he is planning on displaying a lot of dangerous Monsters, Larry has chosen to hire the talented Jägermeister Louella York to work in his carnival. He must pay 3 Gold Crowns (to the supply) when he plays this card, but for the rest of the game he will need one less Hunter at the end of each Season to keep his audience safe.

EVENT CARDS

In a kingdom filled with magical monsters, there are bound to be some unexpected happenings. A clever Carnival master knows how to take advantage of these opportunities when they come around.

Event cards provide a benefit when you play them. These cards are one-use only: after you receive the benefit of the Event card, you must discard it from the game.



Example: It's been a good Season for Richard, and he now has a total of three basic Caves Land cards and The Great Cavern (worth 3 Land Points). Now's the perfect time for him to play the Cave Tour Event card! Since he has 6 Caves Land Points, he gets to take 6 Gold Crowns from the supply—a pretty neat little profit!



SECRET GOAL CARDS

Every carnival wants to display monsters and earn piles of gold from the public. But every carnival master has their own ideas of what the “perfect” carnival will offer... Secret Goal cards offer another way to earn victory points. These cards are never played. Instead, they **must** always be stored until the end of the game (see “Store Your Captured Card”). At the end of the game, all of your Secret Goals are revealed and you earn the Victory Points shown—if you fulfill the requirements on the Secret Goal card (see “The End of the Game”).



Example: Jesper just captured the Dark Lord Secret Goal. Doing his best to hide a sinister grin, he eagerly pays a Gold Crown to store this card, putting it into his Storage pile, hidden from the other players. At the end of the game, Jesper reveals his Dark Lord card. During the game, he was able to display five different Dark Monsters. Now he gets 10 bonus VP!



Example: On the very first turn of the first season, John looks at his cards and sees the Great Old One staring back at him. With only two Starting Lands, there is no way he can play this mighty beast now! He knows it's a gamble, but he decides to take a risk and chooses to capture this Dreamlands Monster. He pays 1 Gold Crown, and puts it face down to his kept cards.



Three Seasons later, it's close to the end of the game, and John knows it's finally time. He has collected a lot more Land cards, so now he can pay the 10 Land Points. He takes the Great Old One from his kept cards and puts it into play.

OPTION 2: STORE YOUR CAPTURED CARD

If you do not want to play the card you just captured (or if you cannot play it), then you must store that card. Every time you store a card, you must pay 1 Gold Crown to the supply. Place the card you are storing face down in the Storage space of your Carnival board (do not show it to the other players!).

You may play any cards from your Storage **at any time except during the Danger Check** (as long as you meet the requirements to play that card, of course!). There is no limit to the number of cards you can have in Storage.

CONTINUE CAPTURING CARDS

Once all players have decided whether to store or play the cards they just captured, it's time to capture the next card: Pick up the cards that were passed to you by your neighbor, choose one to capture, and pass the rest to the next player (as described above).

All players continue to capture, pass, and play or store captured cards until **all** of the cards for the Season have been drafted. Then it's time to see how dangerous these Monsters really are!

PHASE 3: DANGER CHECK!

As the Season nears its end, Dangerous Monsters are likely to try to escape from their captivity. Any Carnival master who cannot guarantee the safety of the public will face some pretty steep penalties!



Some Monsters have one or more Danger symbols on the right side of the card. These are known as Dangerous Monsters. In this phase, you must have Hunters at least equal to the total number of Danger symbols showing on the Monsters you played **this Season**. You will have to pay a fine for every Danger symbol you cannot provide a Hunter for!

Remember: You cannot play any cards from your kept cards during this phase. Make sure you give every player a chance to play any kept cards they want to play before you begin the Danger Check.

THE HUNTERS

ROYAL HUNTERS: First, the king will send out his Royal Hunters. They patrol the countryside to make sure there are no dangerous Monsters around. One player rolls all three Royal Hunter dice. Each Royal Hunter die will show 0, 1, or 2 cages. Add up the cages to determine the number of Royal Hunters there are this Season.



Royal Hunters can be used by **every** player that Season.

Royal Hunters always return to the castle after hunting. Any Royal Hunters you don't use cannot be saved until the next Season.



STAFF HUNTERS: Some Staff cards supply Hunters. You can use each of these Hunters **once** each Season. Any Staff Hunters you don't use cannot be saved until the next Season.



HUNTER TOKENS: Some Event cards will award you Hunter tokens. Each Hunter token can be used only once! But, unused Hunter tokens can be saved for a later Season.

THE HUNT


Add up all of the Danger symbols on the Monsters you displayed during the current Season (don't count any Danger symbols on kept cards or your Menagerie!). This is the number of Hunters you need.

Then, add any Staff Hunters you have to the number of Royal Hunters the king provided this Season. If your total is equal to or greater than the number of Danger symbols you have, then your Carnival is safe! If not, then you will need to find more Hunters.

If you have any Hunter tokens, you may discard them to add Hunters to your total. Remember that Hunter tokens can only be used once.

If you still don't have enough Hunters to at least equal your Danger symbols, you must pay a fine. The fine is 3 Gold Crowns for **each** Danger symbol you have left.

If you cannot pay your fine, you **must** take out enough Loans to pay!



Example: It's been a dangerous Season for Pete's carnival. He put three Dangerous Monsters on display: a Great Wurm (1 Danger symbol), a Dreamcatcher (2 Danger symbols), and a Harpy (1 Danger symbol), for a total of 4 Danger symbols. Richard rolls the dice for the Royal Hunters, but it seems they are busy somewhere else in the kingdom because only one cage is rolled! That leaves Pete with 3 Danger symbols he has to find hunters for. Fortunately, he hired Minor Dare last season, who provides him with one Hunter. He also has 1 Hunter token from a Safety Training Event card he played. Discarding the token brings his total up to three Hunters (1 Royal Hunter + Minor Dare + 1 Hunter token)—still one Hunter short! Pete will have to pay 3 Gold Crowns (to the supply) as a fine for his last Danger symbol.

SEASON'S END

After the Danger Check is complete, the Season comes to an end. Before the next Season begins, you need to finish these two steps:

1. AWARD TROPHY

Each player compares the Monsters they put on display this Season that match the current Season card. The player who has displayed the most valuable matching Monster cards takes the Season card as a Trophy and places it face down in their Menagerie. If there is a tie, no one takes the trophy and the Season card is discarded from the game.

2. RETIRE MONSTERS

The public quickly loses interest in the Monsters that they have already seen. You will need to find new Monsters to bring them back next Season! Take all of the Monsters you played this Season and place them face down in the Menagerie on your player board. Those Monsters will have no further effect until the end of the game.

A NEW SEASON?

If you have just completed the fourth Season (there are no more Season cards left in play), the game ends. If not, begin the next Season with Phase 1: Reveal Season Card.

Example: It's Aerie Season, so the carnivals are showing off their best Aerie Monsters. Richard played three small Aerie Monsters: the Lightning Mouse, the Cloudling, and the Razorwing, each worth 3 VP for a total of 9. John played two: the Wingfolk (1 VP) and a Pegasus (4 VP) for a total of 5. Nene only played one Aerie Monster, but it's a doozy: the Phoenix, worth 16 VP. Nene's 16 VP is a lot more than either Richard's 9 or John's 5, so she easily takes home the Aerie Season Trophy, worth 3 VP.



Richard:



John:



Nene:



THE END OF THE GAME

Once the fourth Season is over, the game ends. It's time to add up your score and crown the Grand Master of Monstrous Carnivals!

SECRET GOALS

First, all players reveal any Secret Goals they have amongst their kept cards. If you fulfilled the requirements listed on your Secret Goal card, you receive the Victory Points shown. Many Secret Goals can award you points more than once, each time you meet the requirements.

VICTORY POINTS

Add up your Victory Points. Your points include:

- The Victory Point value of all the Monsters in your Menagerie. (Monsters amongst your kept cards are not worth any points!)
- Any Victory Points you earned by completing Secret Goals.
- Each Gold Crown you have is worth 1 Victory Point.
- Each unused Hunter token you have is worth 1 Victory Point (Staff Hunters do not award points).
- Each Season Trophy you collected is worth the Victory Points shown.

LOANS: Every Loan you have **costs** you 5 Victory Points.



Example: At the end of the game, Richard is ready to add up his score. First, he counts up the VP value of all the Monsters he played during the game: Surfwhip (1VP), Crabman (4VP), Stag King (6VP), Forestmaw (13VP) and Dreamcatcher (10VP), for a total of 34VP. Then he reveals his two Secret Goals: for his Cute Monsters Secret Goal, he gets only 1VP (for the Surfwhip—his other Monsters are too large), but his Big Payroll Secret Goal awards him 12VP since he has hired four Staff cards. Counting his Gold Crowns lands him 7 more VP, but he doesn't have any Hunter tokens so he gets no points for those. He did win the Depths Season Trophy though, which is worth 3 VP. The bad news is that he had to take out one Loan during the game, which costs him 5 VP.

Richard's final score is: 36 (Monsters) + 13 (Secret Goals) + 7 (Gold Crowns) + 3 (Trophy) - 5 (Loan) = 54. Not too shabby!

The player with the highest total of Victory Points (after subtracting for Loans) is the winner! If there is a tie, the tied players share the win.

A NOTE ON GAME PACE

Once the fourth Season is over, the game ends. It's time to add up your score and crown the Grand Master of Monstrous Carnivals! Experienced players may note that it isn't vital that all players wait for one another to select and play cards. When playing casually, it is just fine for some players to draft faster than their neighbors, as long as the cards passed are clearly separated so that the player receiving them doesn't pick up the wrong stack or multiple stacks at the same time. Of course, more serious players may want to follow the formal "all draft/all play" sequence more closely, since the cards you play could impact another player's choice of which cards to capture.

TWO-PLAYER RULES & SIMPLIFIED PLAY

TWO-PLAYER RULES

Two-player games use all of the normal rules, except for these changes:

AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH SEASON: After you deal each player their 8 Carnival cards for the Season, deal each player a second 8-card draw stack, face down. Do not look at your second card stack!

DURING DRAFTING: After you choose which card to capture, draw 1 card from your own draw stack. Then choose 1 Carnival card in your hand to discard from the game before you pass the stack to your opponent. In this way, the mix of cards will change during the course of the Season.

When the draw stacks run out, continue drafting, passing, and playing cards until the card stacks for the Season run out.

SIMPLIFIED PLAY

New players may want to use these rules for their first few games, particularly if they are not already familiar with card-drafting type games:

Before play, remove all of the Secret Goal cards from the deck. Also remove all of the Staff cards and Event cards except the ones that give Hunters, Hunter tokens, or Gold Crowns.

This will allow players to focus on the card drafting, before they get into the deeper strategy elements of the game.